

ORV Recreation Opportunities and DNR's Management of State Lands

DNR is aware of the rate at which ORV use is increasing in the state and recognizes its popularity as a family activity. It is for this very reason that safe and sustainable facilities and mechanisms are required so families can continue to enjoy the sport into the future. DNR is committed to working collaboratively with state and local officials, recreation groups, and industry representatives toward a statewide solution focused on safety, stewardship and sustainability.

DNR has developed and maintains many successful relationships with recreational users of state lands. One particular relationship that has been ongoing for more than ten years is that of the Tahuya/Green Mountain Focus Group. The group is made up of all types of users of the two State Forests. The group meets monthly with DNR staff and discusses any trail actions or changes that will occur within its landscape. Recently, you may have received some information about closures to ORV use in the Tahuya and Green Mt. State Forests. The information that was distributed is incorrect. Below is an update of exactly what is going on within both State Forests.

Within the Tahuya and Green Mt. State Forests there are 183 miles of designated trails. Recently, we have temporarily closed a section of undesignated trail, commonly referred to as Tin Mine Trail. The trail is approximately four miles long and has experienced resource damage from both motorized and non-motorized use. The trail can be reopened at a later date when an appropriate trail design and funding source can be obtained to construct a trail that will not result in sediment running into streams or other resource damage. Both Tahuya and Green Mt. State Forests have designated trail systems that are maintained to DNR specifications by DNR staff and a strong volunteer base. At the present time, DNR does not intend to close any designated trail within either of these areas.

The Green Mt. State Forests road systems have been closed to ORV use for the past ten years. Within Tahuya State Forest, the Goat Ranch, South Spillman, and Plantation roads are closed to ORV use. All other roads within Tahuya State Forest continue to be open for ORV use.

The Tahuya and Green Mountain State Forests are managed by DNR as working forests. As such, DNR must comply with management requirements of the Forest Practices Act, which protects water quality, provides fish and wildlife habitat, protects capital improvements, and ensures that harvested areas are reforested. Damage to soil, logging roads, rivers, streams and riparian areas affects water quality, deteriorates salmon habitat and has a significantly negative impact on DNR's ability to protect both public and trust resources.